

Review of Wheat Import Policy

735. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country is facing shortage in supply of wheat at present and is importing the same;

(b) if so, what quantity and at what price, per quintal, of wheat was imported during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether Government restored custom duty cut on wheat imports, which was brought down to five per cent in August, 2006; and

(d) whether Government propose to review the wheat import policy in the near future; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No wheat was imported on Government account during the last three years. However, in 2006, to augment the central pool stock, Government has contracted 55 lakh tons for imports through State Trading Corporation at an weighted average price of US\$205.31 per ton (Rs. 9548.31).

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The Government keeps assessing the supply and demand position of wheat factoring in the international and prevailing market prices, ensuring commitments to be met under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), other food based welfare schemes and emergency relief measures (like flood/drought, etc.) and takes timely decisions, if any required, to keep intact the food security for the nation.

Industrially backward areas in Andhra Pradesh

736. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has identified any industrial backward areas in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what special schemes are being implemented by Government for